**Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

# CONSUMER TIME

NETWORK: NBC-RED DATE: September 13, 1941

ORIGINATION: WRC TIME: 11:00-11:15 AM-EST

Produced by Consumers' Counsel Division of the Department of Agriculture, and presented in cooperation with defense and nondefense agencies of the United States Government working for consumers.

oooOooo

1. ANNOUNCER: This is CONSUMER TIME.

2. SOUND: SCHOOL BELL . . RINGING IN DISTANCE . . COMES CLOSER . . FADES

3. BOY 1: Gosh, Sam, we'd better hurry . . we'll be late to school. That's the last bell.

4. BOY 2: Awww, Johnny . . I don't wanna go to school. I'm gonna look for some berries in the woods. I'm hungry.

5. BOY 1: C'mon . . don't you remember . . the new teacher said she was gonna have some hot food for us today?

6. BOY 2: I forgot that . . Gee, let's run.

7. SOUND: SCHOOL BELL . . FADE ON . . HOLD . . OFF

8. NARRATOR: Let us tell you a story today . . a story about Johnny and Sam . . about Emma and Florence . . and Frank and Mary and Jane . . your children . .

(MORE)

children living on your block or down the road a way on the old Jones farm.

You know them . . you see them walking off to school every morning . . or climbing on the school bus at the crossroads . . some of them belong to you . .

Did they have a good breakfast this morning . . some fruit . . a hot cereal . . toast . . and some milk?

Did they?

Well, what about supper tonight? What have you got for them? More milk? Fresh green vegetables . . potatoes . . meat?

And what about lunch? Do these youngsters come home from school and sit down to a good hot soup or stew, with whole wheat bread and more milk?

If you can answer yes to all those questions, you're lucky . . and so are the children . . mighty lucky.

Do you know why?

Let me tell you . . just a few facts and figures . .

(MORE)

not many, but just enough to give you some idea of what we're talking about.

First . . last year, there were about nine million children of school age who were undernourished, as the doctors and nutrition people say. That means they were not eating right. It means they were not getting enough food. Or enough of the right kinds of food.

Just think of that for a second . . nine million children going off to school every morning . . to study . . to learn what makes the wheels go 'round . . and they are not getting enough to eat.

That isn't the way you and I and everyone else would like to take care of our youngsters, is it?

9. WOMAN: Say, mister, you're painting a pretty sad picture there.

10. MAN: Yes ma'am, it is a pretty sad picture.

11. WOMAN: But look . .

12. MAN: Yes?

13. WOMAN: Back where I come from, we're doing something about children who don't get enough food.

14. MAN: You are? Fine. Tell me about it.

15. WOMAN: My husband's a farmer in Kent County, Maryland. We're working the same land his Dad did, and his Dad before him . . . back about five generations, I guess. That's a long time to farm one piece of land, and a lot of that land is almost worn out.

They used to raise peaches on that land a long time ago. That didn't work . . and then they tried grain . . but they tell me the farmers around here couldn't compete with those big farms in the Middle West. That was before my time. Nowadays, we have some truck crops . . tomatoes and asparagus. Some of my neighbors raise turkeys. And some of them have cows and sell milk.

But a family has to work mighty hard to make ends meet. I'm not complaining, mind you . . I'm just telling you this because you got to know it to understand why I butted in on you.

Anyway, a lot of the people where I live just about manage to get along . . we're doing something about the land, with help from the Government . . but it takes a long time to put back into the land what all those crops have taken out. We're working it out, though.

(MORE)

Well, none of the people I know has any too <u>much</u> food . . . and many's the time I sent my kids to school with nothing but a couple of cold biscuits for lunch. And there wasn't anything I could do about it, neither.

Leastways, I didn't think there was.

I knew the children ought to have better food, and so did a lot of the other women . . but you can't do much about that if you haven't got it . . and you haven't money enough to buy it.

We did quite a lot of <u>grumbling</u> about it, too. One day, one of my neighbors, Mrs. Hanson, really started something . . (FADE) Some of us were talking about Mrs. Johnson's new stove . . .

16. SOUND: <u>FADE IN MURMUR OF SEVERAL WOMEN TALKING TOGETHER</u>

17. WOMAN A: If you folks don't mind my interrupting a minute . .

18. SOUND: <u>MURMUR DIES DOWN</u>

19. WOMAN A: There's something I want to tell you . . .

20. WOMAN B: What is it, Mrs. Hanson?

21. WOMAN A: Well, you know my husband is on the school board . .

22. WOMAN B: (LAUGHING) I remember how hard we worked to get him elected.

23. WOMAN A: I remember too. Well, last night the board had a meeting . . to hear the Superintendent's report.

24. WOMAN C: His annual report?

25. WOMAN A: That's the one.

26. WOMAN B: Well?

27. WOMAN C: What did it say?

28. WOMAN A: The most important thing was that our County has the worst record in school attendance in the State.

29. CHORUS: My goodness . . gracious . . is that so, etc.

30. WOMAN B: Well, I know my children had to stay home a lot last year. Seems like they had one cold right after another.

31. WOMAN C: It seems to me we ought to do something about it. That is disgraceful . . the worst record in the State!

32. WOMAN A: When you stop to think of it . . there's been an awful lot of sickness . . especially the children.

33. WOMAN B: I never thought before, but . .

34. WOMAN C: I think we ought to find out just what is the reason we have the worst attendance record in the State.

35. WOMAN A: Good idea. Let's ask that new Public Health Nurse. She should be able to give us some help.

36. CHORUS: Good idea! Fine.

37. WOMAN A: All right . . . If it's agreeable to you, I'll get in touch with her and tell her what we want . . .

(PAUSE)

38. WOMAN NARRATOR: And that's what we did. Mrs. Hanson got the nurse to make some studies and when she came back she sure made us sit up and take notice, all right. In just one school, she found that almost all the children were more than forty percent underweight. Mind you, these children were forty percent underweight. We mothers were shocked. And we didn't just sit around and fret about it, either. We decided that those children of ours were going to be fed better, or we'd know the reason why.

But we ran right up against the same old stone wall . . how were we going to do it? I told you we didn't have any extra money . . and we all knew we couldn't buy any more food . . .

(MORE)

Well, to make a long story short . . we got all the Home Demonstration people together, and some of the officers of the Parent-Teachers Associations, and the Home Demonstration Agent. And we agreed that somehow we had to find ways of giving these children a hot lunch every day . .

39. NARRATOR: How did you go about it?

40. WOMAN NARRATOR: How? Well, I told you we were farmers, didn't I? We decided to grow more vegetables in our gardens . . . things like carrots, cabbage, beans, peas, turnips, tomatoes.

We'd grow more of them than we had been growing . . and then we'd can the extra . . the part we didn't need for ourselves . . and give it to the schools for lunches.

Everybody helped . . the menfolks helped, we women helped . . and the children themselves helped.

We'd bring the vegetables to a school on a certain day. The Home Demonstration Agent would be there, with some good canning equipment . . and she'd see that everything was done right.

(MORE)

And the families that didn't have gardens sent milk or other things to help fill in . . so the children would have a good, well-rounded lunch.

We been doing that for six years now. And we're mighty proud of our children . . they don't stay out of school so often . . they don't get sick so much . . the teachers say the children are getting their lessons better.

And here's another thing, before I stop talking . . I didn't mean to take up so much of your time . . last year we got some extra foods from the Government . . as part of the school lunch program in the Department of Agriculture . . . Foods that farmers have been growing but can't sell . . . Vegetables and fruits and cereals - all kinds of things. And we're doing just fine now . .

I just wanted to tell you that story . . on account of what you were saying back there about school children not getting enough to eat. If people make up their minds to do something about it, they'll do it all right. Especially when they can see with their own eyes how much good it does the kids.

(PAUSE)

41. NARRATOR: School lunches in Kent County, Maryland . . school lunches served from chuck wagons on the desert in Nevada . . school lunches served in public schools in Brooklyn . . in every State in the country . . five million school children last year got a hot nourishing lunch every school day from this Government program.

Let's take a look around and see what lunches for these five million youngsters mean.

Farmers are growing this food, so let's see what a farmer thinks . .

42. FARMER: Of course, children should eat decent, and I'm all for it. No real farmer likes to see food he's planted and taken care of go to waste. And lots of it did go to waste, let me tell you, until the Government came along and helped us work out some way of getting that food into people's stomachs, where it ought to be . . .

I sure get a kick outa knowing that some of the vegetables I grow are going into those school lunches . . and helping to make those kids healthy and strong.

(MORE)

43. NARRATOR: And the teachers in the schools . . what do they think about this business of giving children free hot lunches every day?

44. TEACHER: It's impossible for me to realize the change in my children. I used to be so discouraged . . looking up from my desk and seeing in front of me children whose faces were drawn . . whose bodies were thin . . and whose minds simply couldn't do the simple things I required .

Now it is a joy to teach then . . they are alert . . they want to learn . . and they look like children who once again were beginning to live.

45. NARRATOR: A county school superintendent . .

46. SUPERINTENDENT: There's not much I can say about these school lunches that hasn't already been said. The change in the morale of the children is nothing short of miraculous. And absences because of illness are way down. Their marks are improving rapidly, and altogether it's been one of the highlights in my life. There's a little story I'd like to tell, if I may. I was visiting a school in my County the other day . . a child came into the school room and handed the teacher a note. After reading it, she turned to the child and said . .

47. TEACHER: That's all right, Frank. You tell your father I said it was.

48. BOY: Thank you, ma'am.

49. TEACHER: Would you like to hear this note, Mr. Lawton? I think it . . .

50. SUPERINTENDENT: Yes, read it.

51. TEACHER: 'Dear teacher . . will you excuse Frank and his brother Jim from school this morning because I need them to help me pick cotton. Please save them a seat for lunch. They will be there and will stay at school for the afternoon classes.'

52. SUPERINTENDENT: Well, that one little incident proves to <u>me</u> how necessary these school lunches are to our children and to their families.

53. NARRATOR: I could go on calling on people all the rest of the day, but that isn't necessary, is it? Each and every one of them would say about the same thing. You who have children of your own don't need to be told how important it is for you to see that those children get the food they need, do you?

(MORE)

And those of you who don't have children don't need to be told that healthy children now mean healthy citizens tomorrow.

It isn't one person's job to see that the children in the country get enough to eat or the right things to eat. It isn't my job, and it isn't yours . . not all alone. It's everyone's job. There are some things in this country that we can't be very proud of . . and one of them is that picture of nine million undernourished school children.

54. WOMAN: Can I butt in, please?

55. NARRATOR: Certainly.

56. WOMAN: I just want to get those figures straight . . you said nine million children were undernourished . . but then you said only five million of them got these free school lunches last year. Doesn't that leave only four million not getting hot lunches?

57. NARRATOR: You're right.

58. WOMAN: Well, what's going to happen to those four million . . aren't we going to feed them, too?

59. NARRATOR: That's a question for you to answer . . you and the millions of other mothers in the country . . and the fathers, too. I'll tell you why it is up to you. This business of getting school lunches in your schools is a local problem, first.

60. WOMAN: A local problem?

61. NARRATOR: Yes, and it is up to local communities to make the first move . . and to keep on helping after the plan is started. Let me tell you how it works . . First, there's food . . that's the most important item, of course.

A lot of food is supplied by the Government through the Department of Agriculture. But this food isn't always enough to make well-balanced meals . . and that's where the local groups and communities come in. They must supply those extra foods. There aren't many of those extra foods that are needed, but there are some.

And then there's another thing . . you can't fix up hot lunches without stoves to cook them on . . and pans and kettles and dishes and sinks. Those all have to come from the local community.

And, of course, you have to have a place to do the cooking . . and a place to serve the lunches. That, too, is up to the local community. (MORE)

And finally, you can't do any of these things unless you have the people . . . people to do the organizing, like those women in Kent County, Maryland . . people to take the responsibility for seeing that the meals are cooked right and that the right combinations of foods are planned . . . and people to see that the equipment is taken care of and is kept clean and sanitary. Oftentimes, the WPA and the NYA can furnish help.

Well, there you are. That doesn't sound like an impossible job, does it? It's a big order, I'll admit, but it's one of the most challenging jobs facing us right now. We hear lots about defense . . about the importance of building a strong America. You and I know that strong Americans mean a strong America. And we know that millions of future Americans are right now going to school. Are they going to be strong and healthy? Are they going to have the bodies and the brains they will need to run our country?

That's a question you have to answer. And my suggestion is a simple one . . it won't solve the problems of the world . . but it will help . .

(MORE)

First, answer this question . . . do you think hot school lunches are important?

Second, . . do you have a school lunch program in your schools?

Third, . . if you don't, would you like to know how you might help get one started?

If you answer that last question, yes, here's my suggestion . . . write us a little card . . only a penny post card . . send it to Consumers' Counsel, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. That's all you need to do, and we'll send you a little pamphlet that will tell you the steps you need to take to get a school lunch program started in your town.

Thanks for listening to this story . . and let's see if we can't find some way to get hot lunches to every one of those nine million undernourished children this year. Are you with me?

And now here's , our announcer, who will give you that address again.

62. ANNOUNCER: It's an easy address . . Consumers' Counsel, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. A penny post card is all you need, with your name and address and the call letters of the station over which you heard this program. Ask for the free pamphlet on School Lunches.

CONSUMER TIME has been produced by your Consumers' Counsel in the Department of Agriculture, and was presented in cooperation with defense and nondefense agencies of the United States Government working for consumers.

Tune in at this same time next week for another program in this series. Your consumer reporters will bring you information about how to get your winter wardrobe in shape and facts about how to buy shoes.

Heard on today's program were

CONSUMER TIME has been presented as a Public Service by NBC and the independent radio stations associated with the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company.